SHUT HAPPENS

Resilient ORGANISATIONS
www.resorgs.org.nz

A SHORT GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR THE UNEXPECTED

This short guide will take you through some steps to help your business be ready to survive a crisis and potentially thrive in the aftermath.

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1.

PLANNING AHEAD

This is all about thinking ahead, making sure you have as much as possible in place to help your organisation, no matter what the disruption.

KNOW YOUR BUSINESS ESSENTIALS

A business continuity plan (BCP) is about knowing what is essential to keep your business operating and ensuring you can get these essentials.

The key step in creating your plan is thinking about what your minimum needs are to keep your organisation running. You need to think about what resources are essential and how you might get these if you can't access your usual ones. This could include premises, equipment, supplies, people, IT, and communications.

We recommend doing this as a team. Get everyone together (maybe during a regular team meeting or a tea break).

- Introduce the concept of business continuity.
- Explore various scenarios (floods, earthquakes, storms, accidents etc) where different key resources (including staff) are unavailable.
- Brainstorm different solutions. Think about "what if...?", do you have a plan or process in place for a variety of situations? This will help identify key vulnerabilities in your business.

Remember to share your plan.

Your team need to be able to find it if you are not available.

Make it fun and keep repeating it!

Don't forget to document your team's responses and ideas.

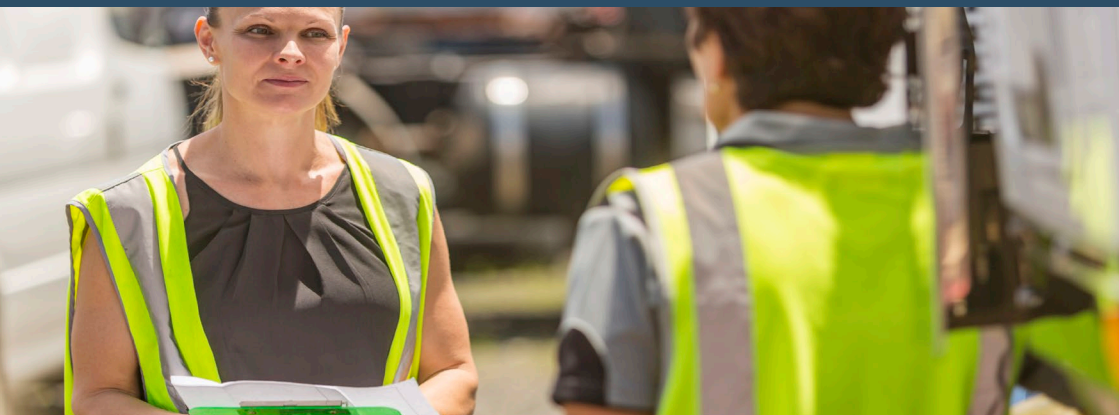
LEARN MORE

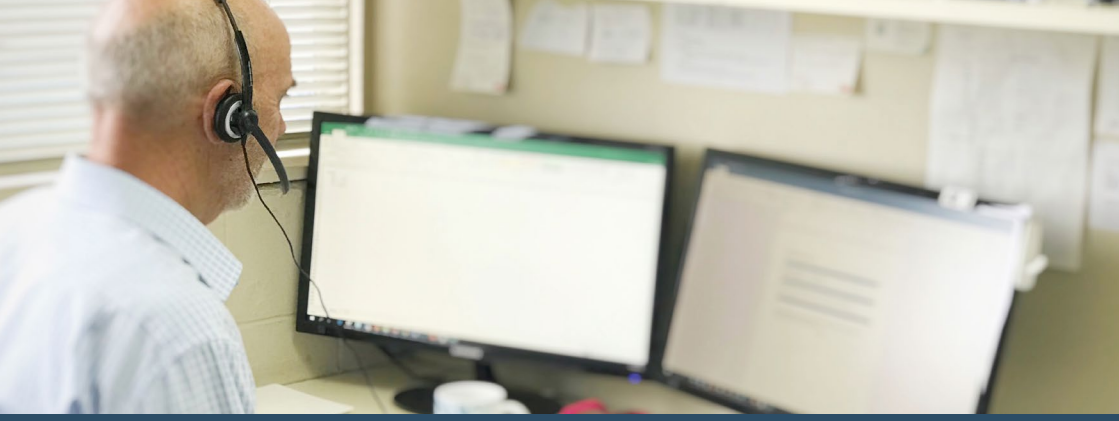
Visit *aucklandemergencymanagement.org.nz/work-ready* for step by step guides and templates that take you through the BCP process.

KNOW HOW TO CONTACT KEY PEOPLE

Once you know you and your family are safe, one of your first tasks should be to contact your staff and other key people for your organisation.

- Do you know how to contact your staff, suppliers, or key customers if you can't access files on your computer or have no internet access?
- Is there someone in your organisation who knows where to find this information if you aren't available?
- Do you and your staff have personal plans for communicating with your families during a crisis?





CHECK YOUR CONTACT LIST CAN WORK FOR YOU IN A CRISIS

- ☐ You can access your list offline (maybe print a copy as well).
- ☐ Key members of your team know how to access it.
- ☐ You have all your key contacts accessible on your mobile phone.
- ☐ You have thought about different communication methods to use in various crisis scenarios (no electricity, mobile networks overloaded, etc).
- ☐ You and your team have thought about how you will contact family in a crisis.

Run through this checklist regularly (at least once a year).

Put together a communication plan

Work out how you and your team will communicate with each other and your clients and customers in a crisis.

KNOW HOW TO ACCESS YOUR KEY BUSINESS DATA

In a crisis, the quicker you can access your business records and get your key systems up and running, the less interruption there will be to your business and cashflow.

You probably keep most of your organisation's records in a digital format on your computer or in the cloud. Make sure ALL data that is critical to your business is stored safely, regularly backed up, and accessible offline.

Important data can include financial records, customer contact lists, manuals, contracts, emails, project documents – anything that you would need to continue your operations in a crisis! Don't forget to consider anything that is still paper based.

Imagine you have to leave a burning building without any business computers, can you easily access all important information?

TRY THE 3-2-1 RULE FOR BACKUPS

Keep 3 copies of your data on 2 different devices/ cloud systems with 1 off-site storage solution.

KNOW YOUR BUSINESS GOALS

Being clear about your business goals before a crisis will give you a good head start on the road to recovery.

You may need to make speedy decisions with limited information during a crisis. To make effective decisions in the heat of the moment, it is important that you are clear about your organisation's goals.

For example, if your business goal is about providing excellent service to local residents, relocating out of an area following the loss of your premise is less preferable than operating out of a temporary premise on site.

Make sure your team also know and understand your business goals. They will be helping and supporting your decisions.

Check you and your team are on the same page

Ask your team to state what your business is all about in 3-4 sentences or less. Does everyone have the same answers?

If everyone's answers are different, then it's time for a refresher!

Get your team together to create and practice an "Elevator Pitch" that summarises your business in the time it takes to ride an elevator (think 30-60 seconds!).

A shared sense of purpose will help you all pull together to get your organisation through disruption.

TEST AND REVIEW YOUR PLANS

As your organisation grows, and the world around you changes, it is important to stay up-to-date.

Review your thinking, test your contingency plans, and update your documents and processes regularly to make sure they will work. You will also want to make sure your team are aware of and understand these plans and their role in them.

HOW TO TEST AND REVIEW YOUR PLANS

Get your whole team together at least once a year, It doesn't need to be time consuming – you can do this exercise in 30-60 minutes.

With your team:

- Set up a scenario that will test your plans and processes. For example, a super storm event with power outages, phone networks overloaded and staff unable to get to work.
- Focus on how you will manage the consequences of the disruption. How will you and your team manage working from home? Operating without a key piece of machinery? Or your premises being closed for a week or longer?

After the exercise, review, and update your plans. What did you learn? Where can you improve?

Try a different scenario each time you run a test. No two crises will be the same, but you may find that similar solutions work in different situations.

Also, remember to review your plans after using them in a crisis event. There are likely to be some important lessons learned that you need to capture.

2.

BUILDING YOUR ABILITY TO ADAPT

Preparing for the unexpected is not only about planning. It is also about the building blocks that help you adapt when needed.

BUILD STRONG BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

People can be a powerful source of information.

The more people you know and interact with, the more you will find out and learn. This may include useful information to help you with running your business. It can also give you new insights and ideas for preparing and adapting your business to manage a crisis.

How to build these relationships

- Get involved with industry and local business associations and networking groups.
- Get to know your neighbours, customers, suppliers, competitors, and your local community.

When a crisis occurs these relationships may be what helps get you through.

Perhaps a neighbour has spare space you can use if yours is damaged, your suppliers may prioritise your needs, or an associate can assist with setting up an online shop so you can continue trading.

STAY ALERT TO CHANGE

Keep up with signs of change and new trends that could affect your business.

Crises don't only involve natural disasters, pandemics, or a world economic crisis. A subtle change in customer preferences can be just as critical.

How to stay alert

- Use your staff and connections to keep your finger on the pulse. Ask questions – most people are willing to share their experiences and knowledge.
- Review your insurance.
  Is your cover adequate for today's environment?
- Think ahead and ask yourself:
  - Why or what would stop people from buying from us?
  - What would hinder our ability to operate?

Keep your mind open to subtle changes in your environment. It can keep you ahead of the game.

DEVELOP YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS

In a crisis there are a lot of demands on a leader. You need to know when to be decisive and when to draw on your team, seek out multiple perspectives, and stress test key decisions,

If you develop a few key leadership qualities now you will thrive in a crisis:

- Lead from the heart as well as the head – your team and your customers need to know that you support and care about them.
- Know when to persuade and when to direct - you'll need to be able to switch between strategic and operational thinking during a crisis.
- Learn to manage your own reactions and pressures while taking care of your team.

LEARN HOW TO BE A BETTER LEADER

- Look out for free resources and advice: Business.govt.nz is a good place to start for some free advice: ***www.business.govt.nz/#business-performance/management-and-leadership/***
- Local organisations like the Chamber of Commerce often offer free leadership skills seminars to help you upskill.
- Be brave and ask your team for their honest view on areas in which you could develop more.

BE OPEN TO CHANGE

During a crisis, your organisation may need to change rapidly. With an open mind and some innovative thinking your organisation can make the most of the opportunities that can come with disruption.

This takes a different mindset, a deliberate stepping back, making time, clearing your mind, thinking creatively, and being open to new and different ideas.

If this doesn't come naturally for you, you can nurture and grow these skills in yourself and your team,

- Be open to ideas for improvement and innovative thinking from your team in day-to-day operations.
- If you are the usual go-to person for problems and issues, start encouraging your team to come up with their own solutions.
- If creative thinking is not your sweet spot, find someone else in the business who can be this champion.

You don't have to use all the ideas but make sure your staff feel encouraged and rewarded for coming up with creative solutions.

SPREAD THE LOAD

In a crisis, the volume and size of decisions you need to make may feel overwhelming. Getting your team involved can help lighten the load.

If you don't already, purposefully seek out your team's talents, knowledge, and networks to solve problems and make decisions.

- Involve them in the day-to-day decision-making and running of the business as much as possible.
- Encourage their sense of ownership and pride in the company. Make sure you are all feeling like you are in this together!

You never know who will be available in a crisis. Sharing the load in normal times is important to help your reduce key person risk.

HARNESS THE POWER OF YOUR PEOPLE

Remember, your staff have a vested interest in your business continuing and succeeding. It provides them with an income, workplace friends, and a sense of purpose. Being able to acknowledge this and engage with them can be a powerful force!

FURTHER INFORMATION

Organisational Resilience

resorgs.org.nz

Business Continuity

getready.govt.nz/en/prepared/work/

aucklandemergencymanagement.org.nz/work-ready

business.govt.nz/risks-and-operations/planning-for-the-unexpected-bcp/continuity-and-contingency-planning/

Crisis Management

resorgs.org.nz/chaos-to-teamwork/

resorgs.org.nz/a-boards-role-in-a-crisis/

Insurance

business.govt.nz/risks-and-operations/planning-for-the-unexpected-bcp/insurance/

IT and data backup

business.govt.nz/risks-and-operations/it-risk-and-avoiding-scams/storing-and-backing-up-data/

cert.govt.nz/business/guides/backups-for-your-business/

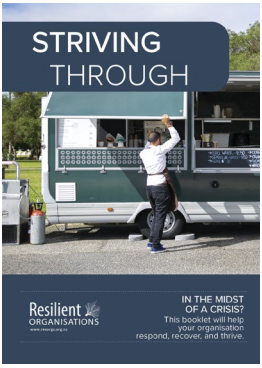
Personal preparedness

getready.govt.nz/en/

Need further help or advice?

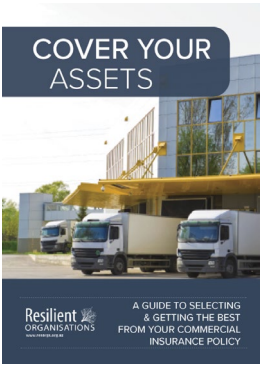
Contact a local business, trade, or industry association (e.g., Chamber of Commerce) for local business advice.

FURTHER READING



Striving Through: Tips, tactics, and plans for managing your business through a crisis

Staffed or stuffed: Creating resilience through your people



Cover your assets: Selecting and getting the best from your commercial insurance policy

For more free resources see Resilient Organisations website (*www.resorgs.org.nz/resources*)

This guide was developed by Resilient Organisations Ltd, a research and consulting organisation based in New Zealand. We have been researching what makes organisations resilient to crises since 2004.

See *www.resorgs.org.nz* for further information.

Resilient ORGANISATIONS

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